



Blue Mountains Forest Partners

Our Mission

“Blue Mountains Forest Partners is a diverse group of stakeholders who work together to create and implement a shared vision to improve the resilience and well-being of forests and communities in the Blue Mountains.”

Full Group Meeting Minutes

Meeting Overview:

- **Date of Meeting:** June 17, 2021
- **Time:** 4:00 – 7:00 pm
- **Location:** Airport Conference Room
- **Facilitator:** Mark
- **Minutes Scribe:** SJ Brown

- **Call to Order: Introductions, changes to the agenda, agenda approval (all):** agenda moved approval, seconded, carries unanimously.
- **Approval of March 2021 Full Group minutes (all):** minutes moved approval, seconded, carries unanimously.
- **Ops’ update (Pam):** short meeting today because we are working on the strategic plan. We have put in and have received grants to support our Wildlife Zones of Agreement development, and are pursuing other grant opportunities.
- **Board elections (SJ):** the slate of Glen Johnston (President), Pam Hardy, Dave Hannibal, and Mark Cerny was elected for 2021.
- **Forest Service project work and other updates (BMRD, PCRD, other staff):** Blue Mountain: Austin: have met with the county NRAC and are developing alternatives for action, working on specialist reports and hope to release the draft EIS soon; Bark: will be an EIS, and are preparing the scoping package, not in CFLRP landscape; Laycock Creek WUI CE: rescinded original decision and issued a new decision to allow for tethered logging systems. Prairie City: Cliff/Knox: very close to releasing the draft EIS by the end of June and will be released publicly (hopefully!) by July 15, and will be the first to use the new Eastside Screens amendment; Upper Bear: hope to get scoping package out in August.
- **Updates on Forest Planning and Travel Management, BIC, revised 21” rule project implementation (Craig):** USFS has been working with the Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) to develop a shared understanding of forest planning issues by counties, the state, and tribal governments. The BIC is developing desired conditions now, which is compelling an agency discussion to figure out how to staff and implement a revision effort; but, the decision to enter planning is made at the Washington Office. The USFS is likely to use a national planning team to undertake the revision effort. Expect to have 1 EIS and 3 decisions/forest plans. USFS



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is talking about holding science panels to help develop understanding around some remaining issues. Discussion followed. How will the USFS merge forest plan revision with travel management planning? Forest planning will occur first, followed by travel management planning.

Forest Service is having a meeting with the Office of General Counsel regarding the new snag retention standard in the 21” rule amendment, which will elucidate the agency’s interpretation of the standard.

USFS has burned about 9,000 acres so far this year, and are currently burning. The smoke we see today is from a couple of prescribed burns.

- **Update on the Upland Forest Restoration ZOA and associated work (James):** James is working on the third reiteration of the Upland Forest Restoration ZOAs based on our monitoring and adaptive management. This work is funded through the state’s Federal Forest Restoration Program.
- **ODF GNA implementation (Ryan, ODF):** the state legislature’s Emergency Board appropriated dollars to do post-fire remediation and restoration after the 2020 wildfires, and the Malheur, ODF, and Grant County were able to obtain money to do some fuel reduction work along some roads; ODF has also used Good Neighbor Authority funding to implement the Flat project as well. ODF was able to obtain an additional staff person, but that person may not be able to stay on past the end of June. The Federal Forest Restoration Program also saw an increase, but is relying on federal dollars to fund that increase.

One of the technical assistance grants through OWEB was granted to the Ochoco to study steep slope logging; should connect with that as we start to implement tethered logging on the Malheur.

- **2021 CFLRP application submission status (Roy, SJ):** Southern Blues Restoration Coalition has reapplied for another 10 years of funding to complete large landscape restoration on the Malheur. We are one of three reapplications from Region 6. CFLRP has brought substantial investment in Grant and Harney Counties, both ecologically but also economically as well. The President’s budget requests \$80 million from Congress to fund this program. The CFLRP Federal Advisory Committee will meet at the end of June to review the proposals.
- **Stewardship contracting “internal review” presentation with Q&A (Dr. Emily Jane Davis):** The Forest Service Region has completed an internal review of stewardship contracts and master stewardship agreements, and has now completed an external review with partners: this is Emily Jane’s report that she recently completed. The report looks at all of the “large” contracts in the region, including our 10-year stewardship contract. See attached presentation for more information. EJ’s results focus on the high-level experience of contractors and others involved in implementing these contracts. Generally, there is an appreciation for the restoration value of the contracts, and the opportunity to work with the USFS in a new way. Questions about design for landscape scale outcomes came up: are we placing units where they “should” be, how intensively do we treat these acres, and what other barriers constrain restoration activities. There



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was an expectation of flexibility in implementation, but those expectations have not always been met, which can cause frustration for both the Forest Service and the contractor. Pricing and cost were also issues that came up across contracts: the cost of the service work vs. timber value, appraisal issues, value of low-value material, and communication. EJ also looked at the role of collaboratives in developing the program of work covered by the contracts: collabs feel ownership around planning, and are uncertain where they fit with implementation.

Master stewardship agreements are different than stewardship contracts: the former require a match on the part of the nonfederal partner, and has different roles for each party. MSAs can have a more flexible approach to implementation in some ways, but also requires more capacity on the part of partners.

In her research, EJ developed some recommendations: 1) establish and maintain a common vision for stewardship contracting; 2) pay attention and prepare for transitions and communication during personnel changes and other disruptions; 3) value the capacity of contractors and partners to meet intended outcomes; 4) increase transparency about the appraisal process, consideration of cost per acre at scale, and updates on Forest Products Modernization (and how it did or did not address some of these issues); 5) engage in open, early, and continued dialogue about the meaning of local community benefit; and 6) deliberately treating stewardship contracting as a learning environment and fostering multiple ways to learn. In sum, large stewardship projects have resulted in substantial benefits, and there is an opportunity to continue to learn and evolve.

Discussion followed. How did EJ evaluate “suitable contractor selection”? Here, there has been some opposition to the 10-year because there is some concern some local contractors aren’t getting work: did you look at this issue? Did you look at whether these contractors were working elsewhere? No, this was not an area of focus of the research. Can you explain the difference between a stewardship contract and a master stewardship agreement? A stewardship agreement is between the USFS and a private contractor, whereas a master stewardship agreement is between the USFS and another government or nongovernmental organization and there must be mutual benefit for both entities, that can subcontract to private contractors or do the work themselves. On the Malheur, we have a master stewardship agreement with the Wild Turkey Federation to improve turkey habitat. Does the USFS plan to use these results to extend the 10 year stewardship contract? Right now there is not a plan to extend that contract, but the USFS is considering a longer term competitive bid service contract. How does funding for stewardship contracts work? USFS must have funding in hand to contract for service work, but can contract through a timber sale because the USFS doesn’t pay out in that situation (it receives funds). Depending on what the value of the timber and service work is will influence where you use what type of contract.

- **FVF monitoring “mini-series” (James):** BMFP conducts two types of monitoring: observational (field trips) and quantitative (FVF). While we are seeing larger and more intense wildfires, they are not consuming standing trees (generally,) but rather the fine fuels: it is this metric that we study. James shared a series of photos showing before/after conditions. The prescriptions remove trees, but we still are not conducting the burning necessary, so fine fuels are not necessarily being reduced. Early results show that we are increasing rate of fire spread, flame length, and reduction of fire intensity for the first year or two, but then it declines



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substantially in the out years. Does not include prescribed fire. We will start to see an increase in reproduction, which will increase fuel loadings: this means we really need to use prescribed fire to increase the trend towards reducing fire risk.

Discussion followed. Some studies show a longer increase in fuels post-thinning: how does this square with your findings? In some study areas in different geographies there is a strong shrub response post-thinning that doesn't occur to the same extent on the Malheur. Are you collecting data about species composition? Yes, we are finding an increase in species diversity post-thinning, and that residual trees are experiencing increased radial growth, which also suggests that we are increasing the health and resistance to disease of the residual trees and stands.

- **Wednesday field trip report (Mark):** we went to Crown task order out of the Camp Lick project with the intention to talk about implementation efficiencies of the applicable prescription and contract. Discussed why unit layout was the way it was, and why the prescription was what it was. Our general reflections were that we still are not removing enough grand fir to meet our objectives. Really enjoyed the field trip: lots of information was shared and insight gained. It was particularly helpful to have the sale administrators there to talk through their processes and requirements, and to hear from BMFP about what we want on the ground.
- **Adjourn**



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Blue Mountains Forest Partners Vision, Guiding Principles, and Grounds Rules for Collaboration

Our Vision

The Blue Mountains Forest Partners represents a broad constituency of stakeholders interested in healthy forest ecosystems, economic vitality and quality of life in Grant County, Oregon. We provide the US Forest Service with proposals for management of National Forest lands, and we support the utilization of forest resources and related opportunities to strengthen local economies.

Guiding Principles

- *To promote forest restoration in Grant County, integrating ecological, economic and community needs that have been developed and/or prioritized through collaboration.*
- *To improve our ability to work collaboratively and participate actively in these issues, finding common ground for our work. Our process will be open, inclusive and encourage participation of diverse stakeholders; our meetings will provide a 'safe' space for discussion and sharing of ideas.*
- *To overcome gridlock in forest planning and implementation. The success of our work is tied to long-term sustainability of forests and communities.*

Ground Rules for Collaboration and Meeting Participation

Members and nonmembers alike are expected to abide by these ground rules

- *Respect each other in and outside of meetings.*
- *No backroom deals.*
- *Personal attacks will not be tolerated.*
- *The personal integrity and values of participants will be respected.*
- *Stereotyping will be avoided.*
- *Commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept—agreements will be honored.*
- *Disagreements will be regarded as “problems to be solved” rather than as “battles to be won.”*
- *Participants are representative of a broad range of interests, each having concerns about the outcome of the issues at hand. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.*
- *Participants commit to keeping their colleagues/constituents informed about the progress of these discussions*
- *Participants commit to stating interests, problems, and opportunities. Not positions.*
- *Participants will air problems, disagreements and critical information during meetings to avoid surprises.*
- *Participants commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. The creativity of the group can often find the best solution.*
- *Participants agree to verify rumors at the meeting before accepting them as fact.*



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- *Respect the facilitator and meeting agenda.*

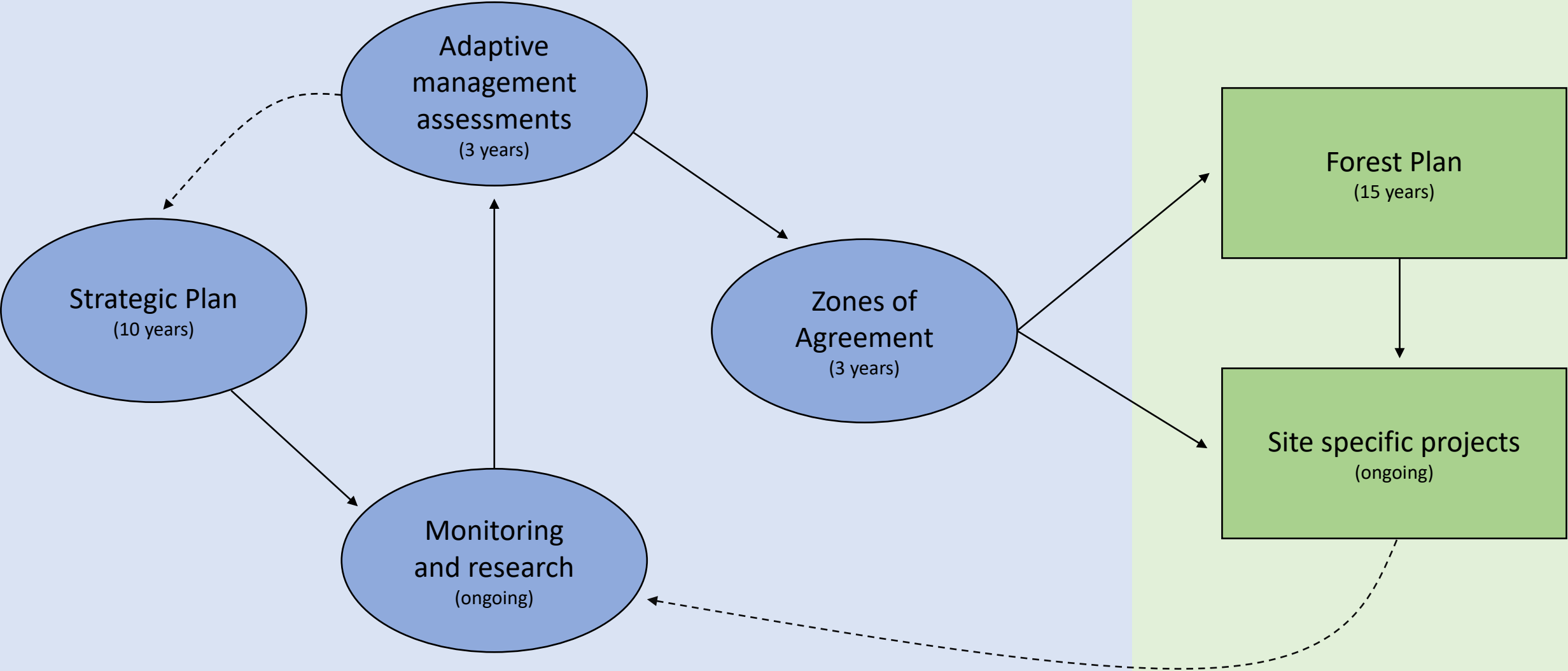
Monitoring & Adaptive Management in the Southern Blue Mountains: Fuel reduction thinning in the absence of fire

June 17, 2021 | James Johnston | Oregon State University and Blue Mountains Forest Partners



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Forest Service



Two types of monitoring

Observational (field trips)



Data-driven

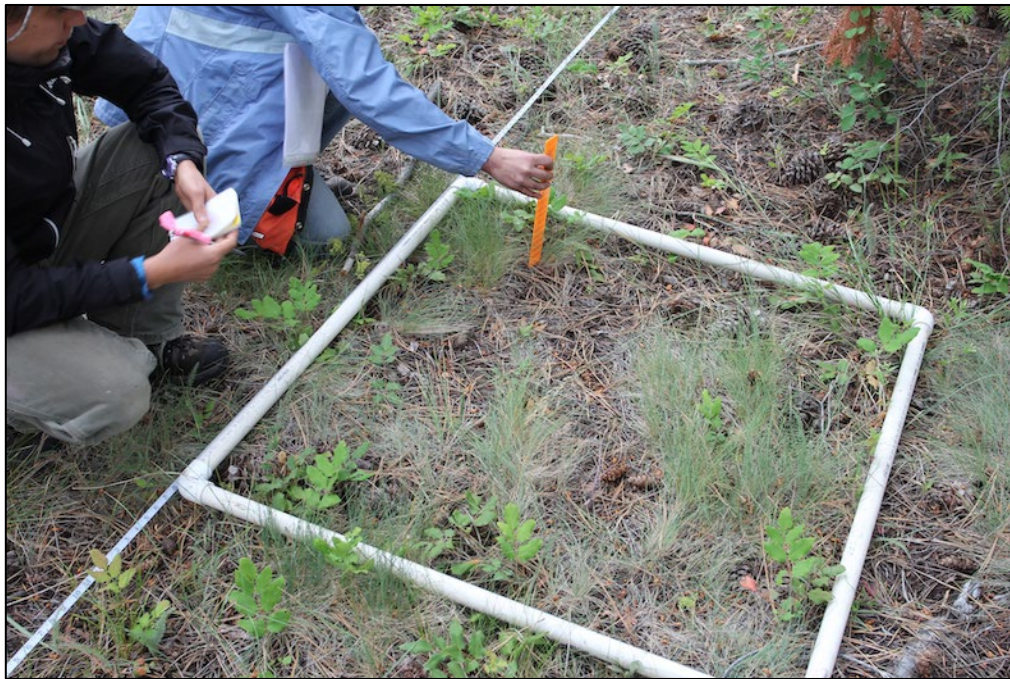


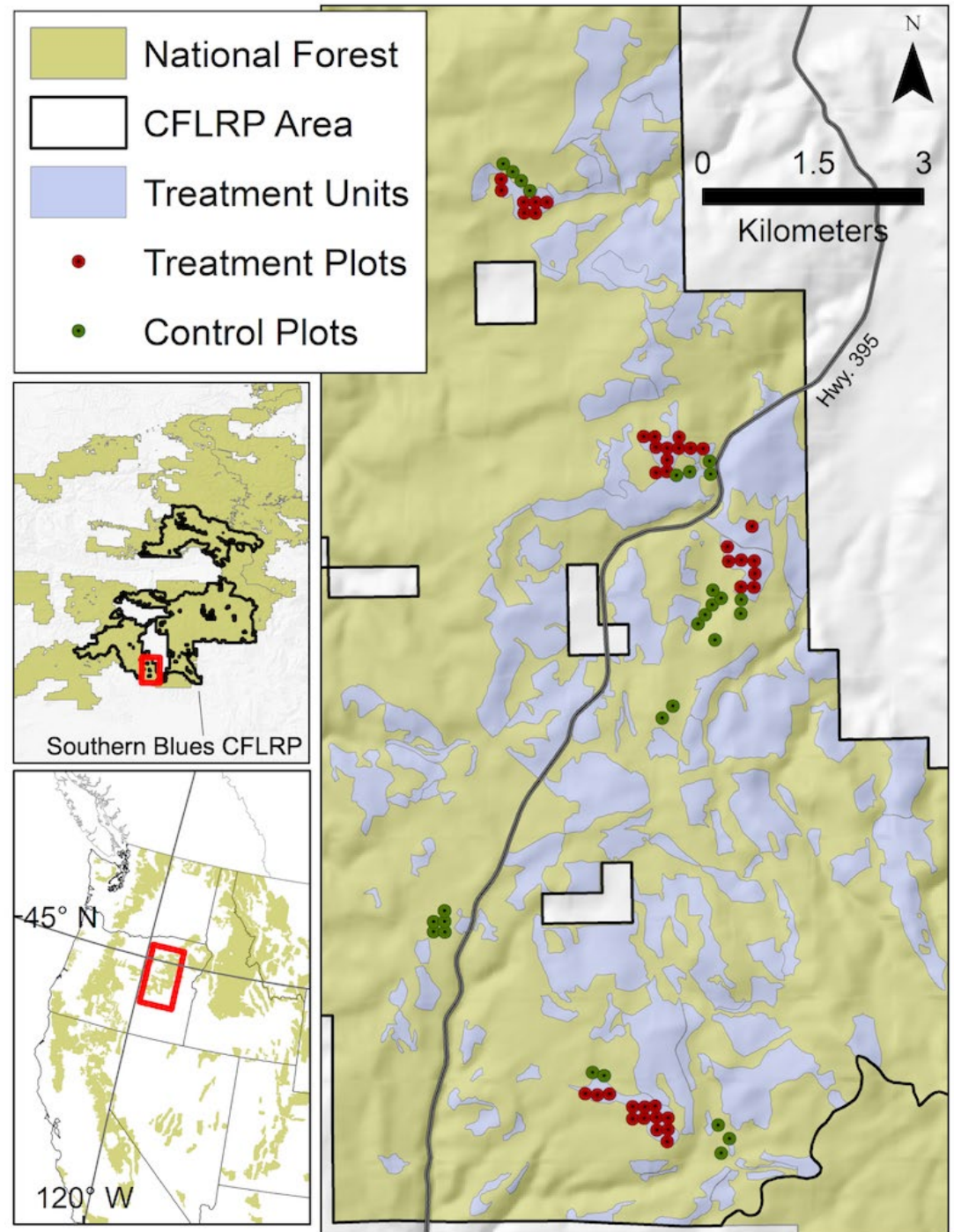
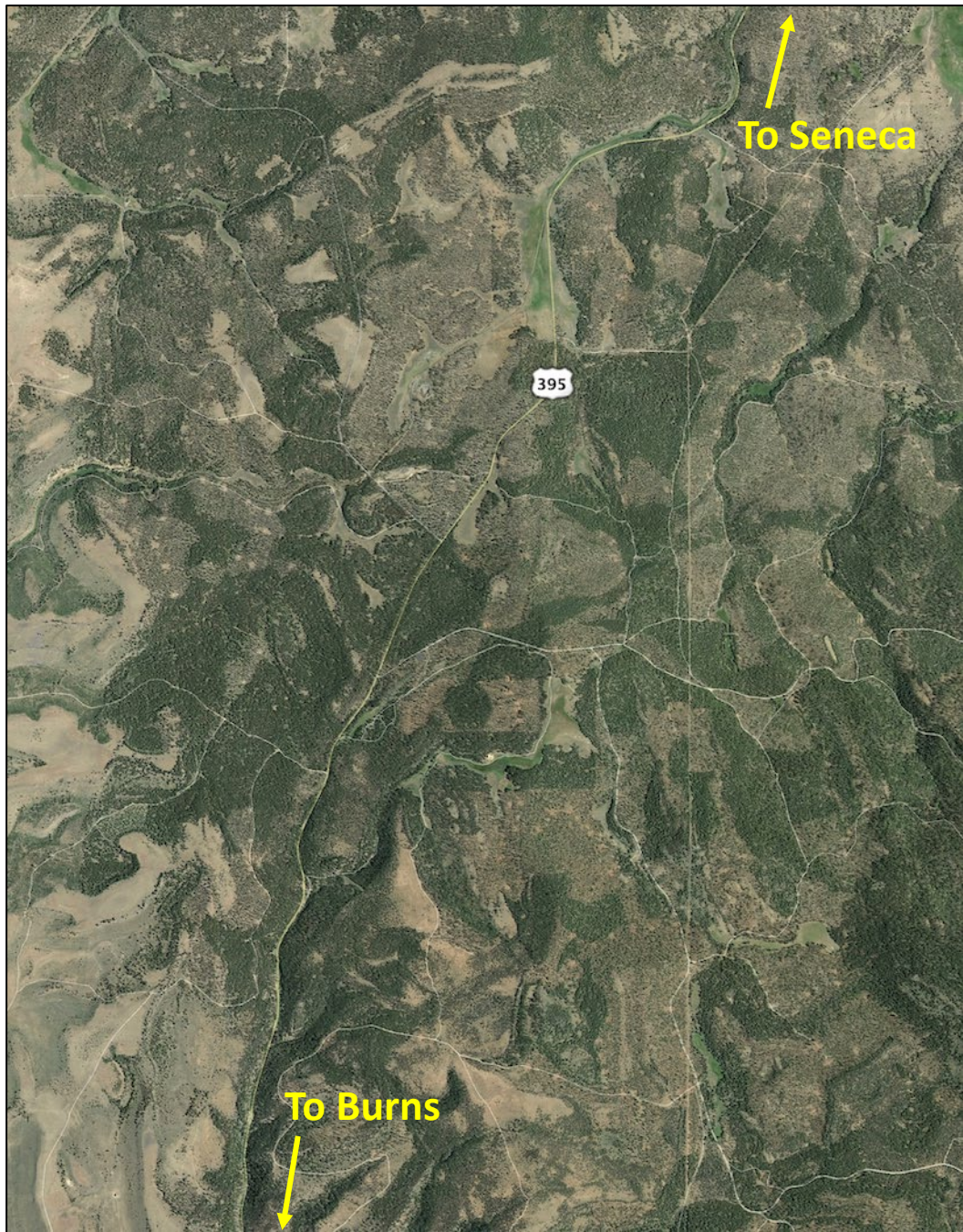
Fire behavior: Fine fuels matter



Fire behavior: Fine fuels matter







2014



2019



2014



2015



2018





Canopy stratum - Trees: live tree > 4.5 feet in height

Total Canopy Cover

	Mode	Min	Max
Total percent cover (%)	50.0	10.0	100.0

not present

Overstory

	Mode	Min	Max
Percent cover (%)	50.0	10.0	100.0
Height (ft)	63.2	20.0	105.0
Height to live crown (ft)	36.9	10.0	60.0
Live foliar moisture content (%)	100.0	70.0	300.0
Density (#/acre)	218.0	150.0	350.0
Diameter at breast height (in)	8.2	6.0	12.0

Scientific Name	Rel Cover
Pinus contorta	100.00

Total relative cover (%)

100% required for Relative Cover

not present

Midstory

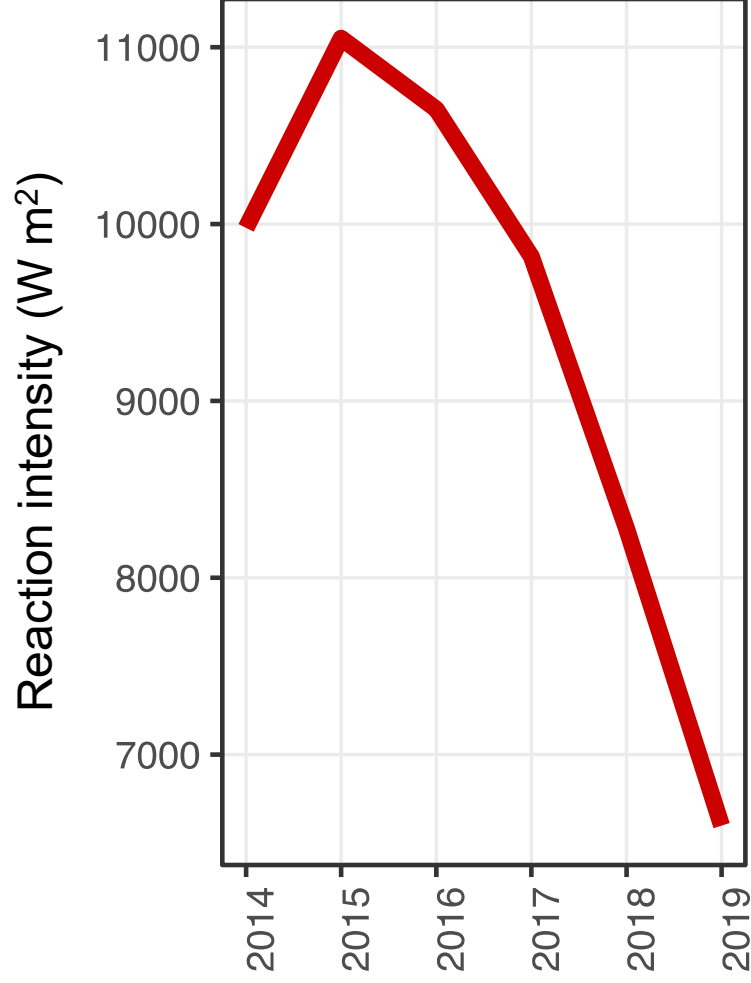
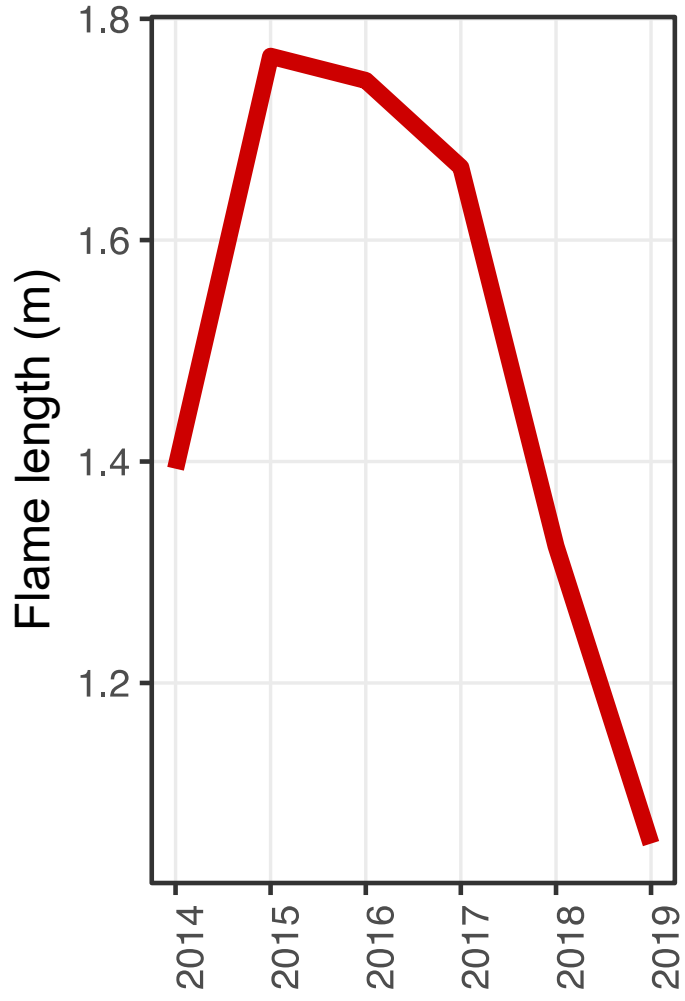
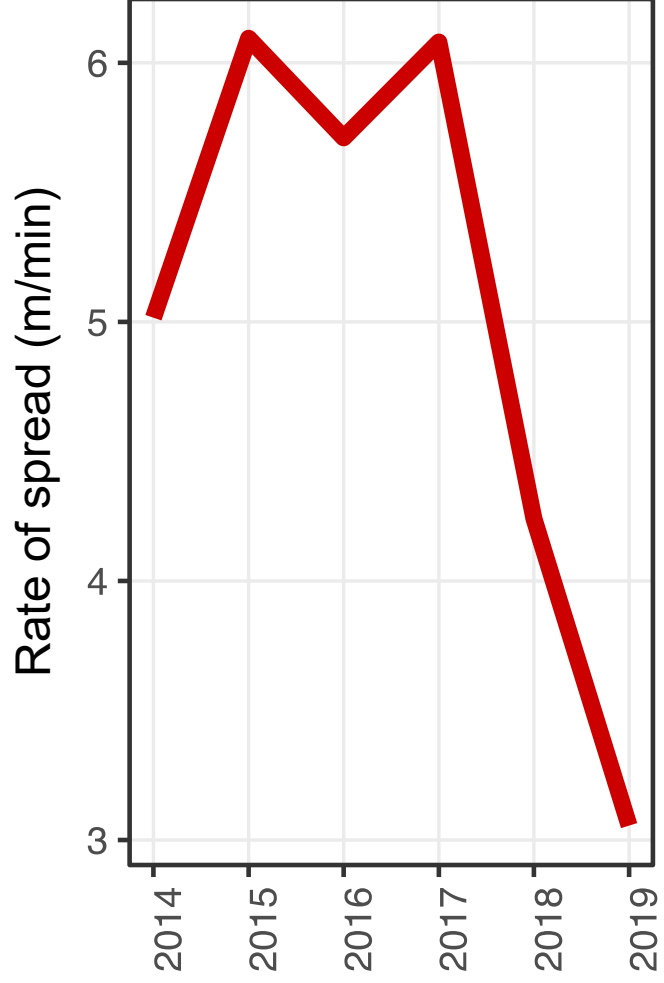
	Mode	Min	Max
Percent cover (%)	not present	not present	not present
Height (ft)	not present	not present	not present
Height to live crown (ft)	not present	not present	not present
Live foliar moisture content (%)	not present	not present	not present
Density (#/acre)	not present	not present	not present
Diameter at breast height (in)	not present	not present	not present

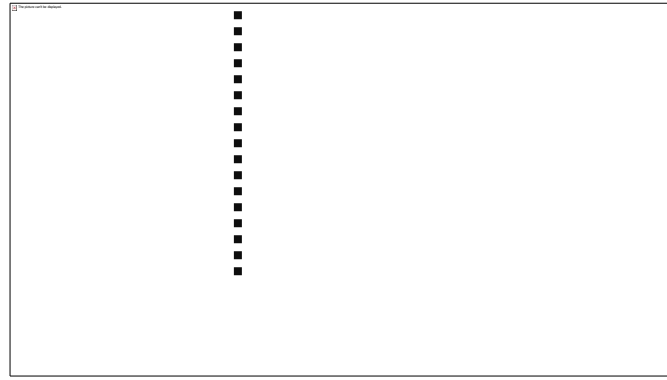
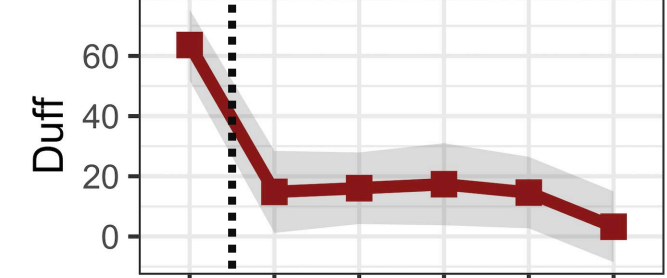
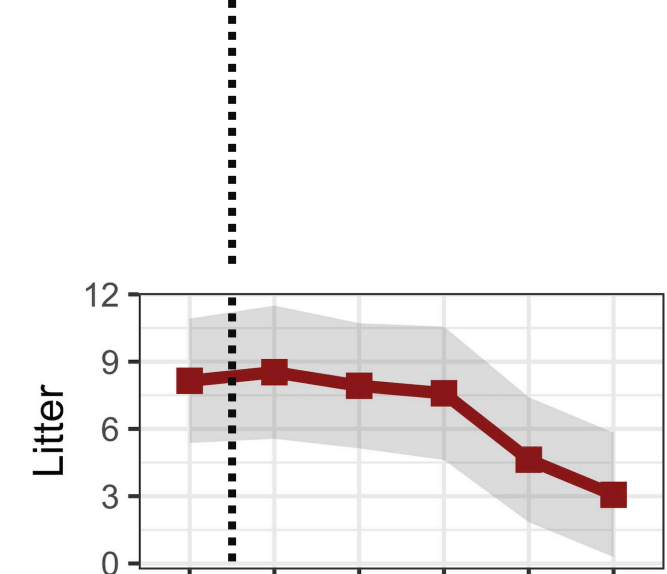
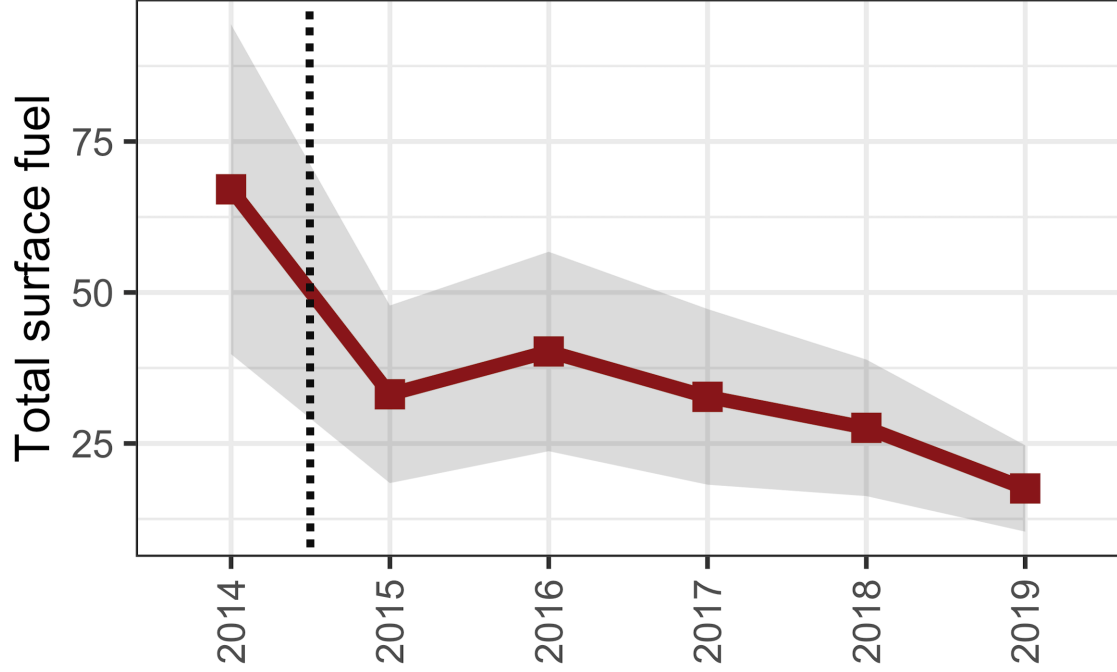
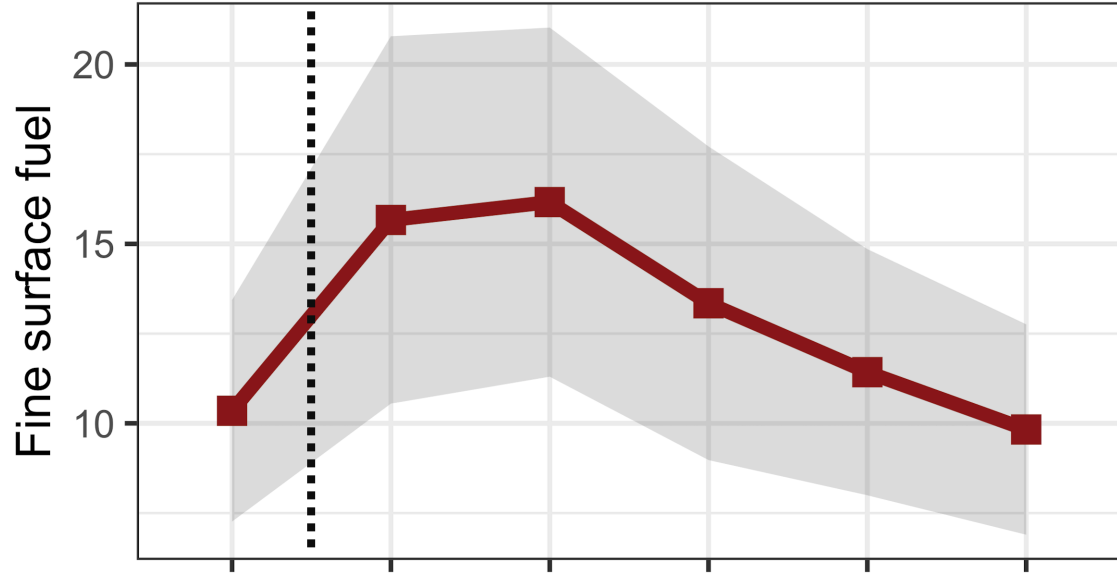
Scientific Name	Rel Cover
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Total relative cover (%)

100% required for Relative Cover

not present





2014

2019



Thanks

Co-PI: Becky Miller

The crew: Kat Morici, Kate Williams, Kylie Meyer, Brett Morissette, Courtnay Pogainis, Hana Maaiah, Tyler Mesberg, Lexa McAllister, Jordan Woodcock, Claire Moreland-Ochoa, Alex Martinez-Held, Amanda Bintliff, Kevin Mason, Julia Olszewski, Leigh Anna Morgan, Tatiana Dolgushina, Kayla Gunter, Jamie Martenson, Tatum VanDam, Kate Wellons, Joel Riggs, Sonya Templeton, Clark Chesshir, and Lizzie Schattle

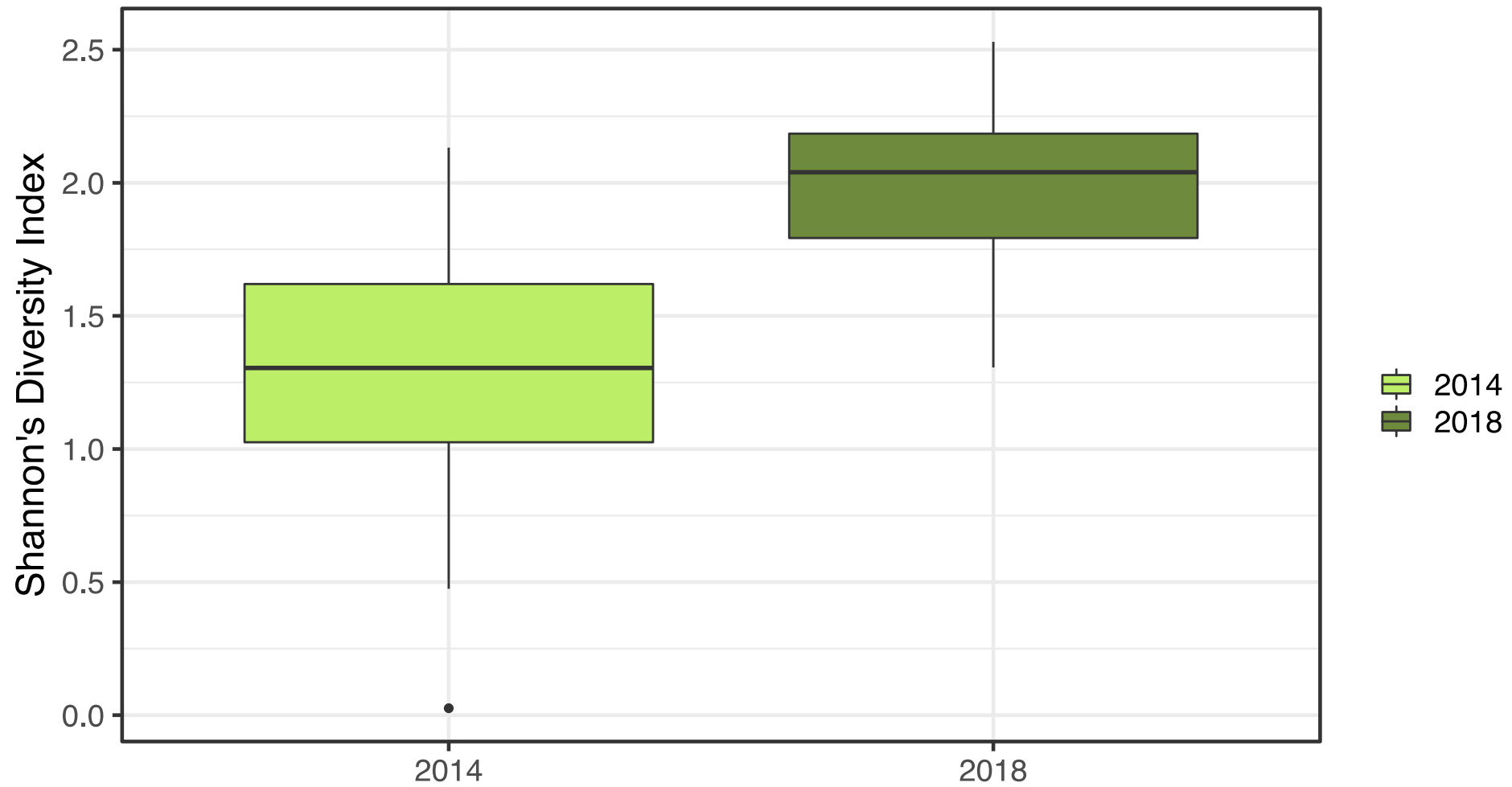


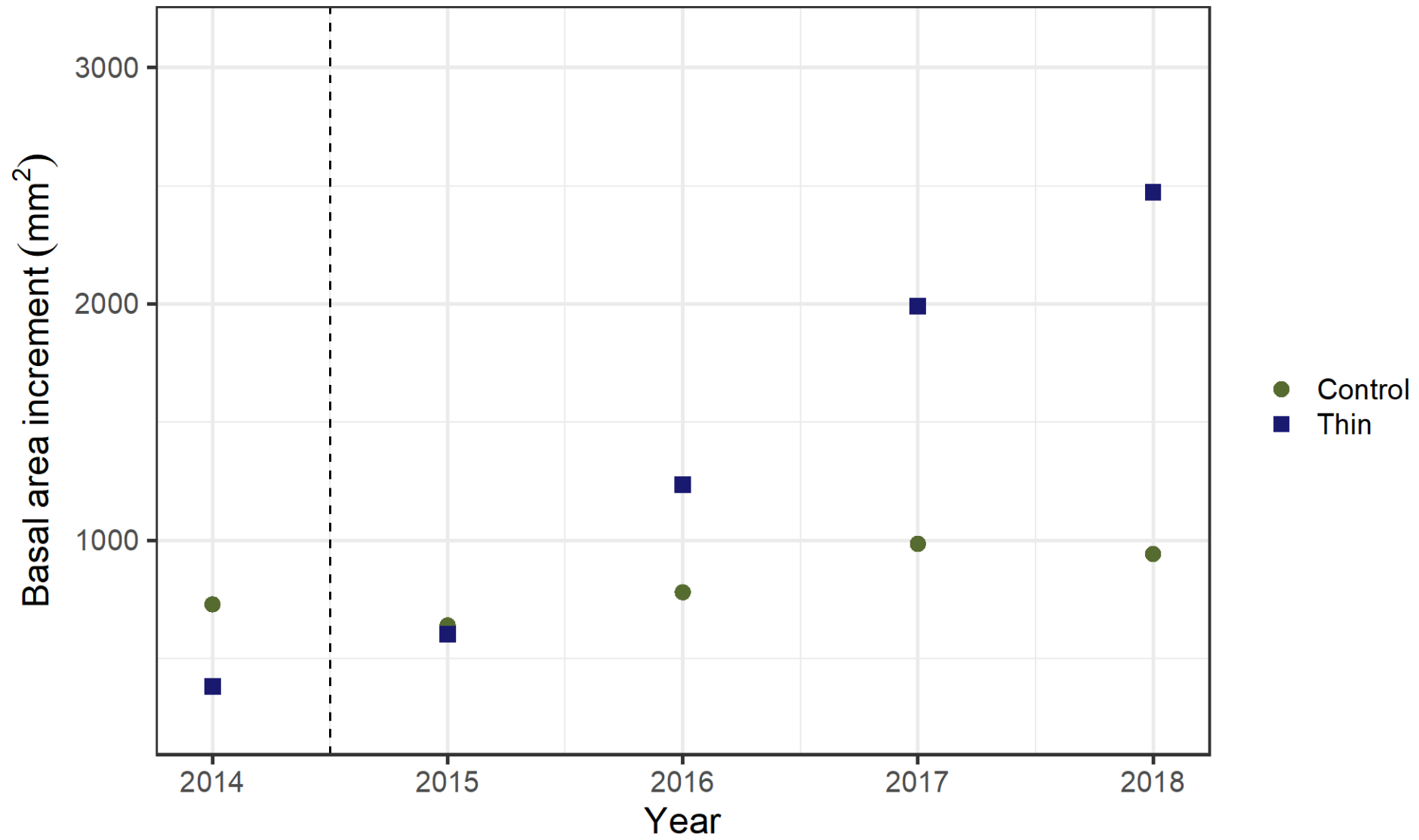
Other slides






Shannon 2014 vs 2018, treated only







Stakeholder Experiences
with Long-Term, Landscape-
Scale Stewardship
Contracting in the Pacific
Northwest

Emily Jane Davis

June 17th, 2021



Intent of stewardship authorities

“...achieve land management goals while meeting local and rural community needs, including contributing to the sustainability of rural communities and providing a continuing source of local income and employment. It focuses on the “end result” ecosystem benefits and outcomes, rather than on what’s removed from the land.”

https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/Stewardship_Contracting/



Mark Webb

Large stewardship projects

- Landscape-scale outcomes sought
- Significant community economic expectations
- Ten year durations
- Contracts or master stewardship agreements

APPROACH

Project	National Forest	Dates	Associated collaborative	Overview
Mill Creek A to Z Ten Year Stewardship Contract	Colville	Awarded in 2013	Northeast Washington Forest Collaborative	IRSC awarded to Vaagen Bros Lumber, Inc, to subcontract third party NEPA analysis for approximately 54,000 acres within two planning areas
Malheur Ten Year Stewardship Contract	Malheur	Awarded in 2013	Blue Mountains Forest Partners	IRSC awarded to Iron Triangle, LLC; 54,059 acres of commercial harvest awarded to date
Lakeview Ten Year Stewardship Contract	Fremont-Winema	Awarded in 2008 and completed in 2018	Lakeview Stewardship Group	IRSC awarded to Collins Pine Company
Klamath Tribes / Fremont-Winema Master Stewardship Agreement	Fremont-Winema	Signed in 2011	NA; core partners to Tribes and USFS on MSA are The Nature Conservancy and Lomakatsi Restoration Project	MSA focuses on approximately 1.7 million acres of the Fremont-Winema National Forest, including 1.1 million acres of former Klamath reservation land and ancestral lands
Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project Master Stewardship Agreement	Rogue River-Siskiyou	Signed in 2010 and extended to 2025	NA; core partners to USFS on MSA are The Nature Conservancy, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, and City of Ashland	MSA focuses on area of approximately 7,600 acres

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Focus of research

1. Roles of partners and collaborative groups
2. Contract or agreement design
3. Communication and interaction with agency staff
4. Flexibility and innovation
5. Learning
6. Perceptions of outcomes



Strengths

- Key informants close to the topic
- In-depth insights
- Common themes, challenges, lessons
- Appropriate for the questions asked

Limitations

- Does not include agency perspectives
- Only close insider perspectives
- Differences in context

FINDINGS

CONTRACTS

Appreciation of outcomes

- Quantity of acres treated--not otherwise possible
- Space to work with agency in new ways



Dave Hannibal



Vaagen Bros. Lumber

Questions about design for landscape-scale outcomes

- Unit size
- Treatment intensity
- Distribution and proximity

Flexibility

- Expectations
- Willingness to walk the ground
- Necessity of suitable contractor selection



Emily Jane Davis

Pricing and costs

- Cost of service work and value of timber
- Appraisals seen as not reflective of context or transparent



Emily Jane Davis

Emily Jane Davis



- Support for use of stewardship
- Investment, sense of ownership, expectations
- Lack of defined role in implementation process

Role of collaboratives

FINDINGS

AGREEMENTS

Substantial partner roles

Fiscal management

Pre-sale administration

In-house crews

Subcontracting

Workforce training

Monitoring and scientific research

Outreach and communications



Emily Jane Davis


Flexible approaches

- Virtual boundaries
- Partner development of burn plans
- Using dxp to accomplish spatial heterogeneity
- Partner discretion in implementation

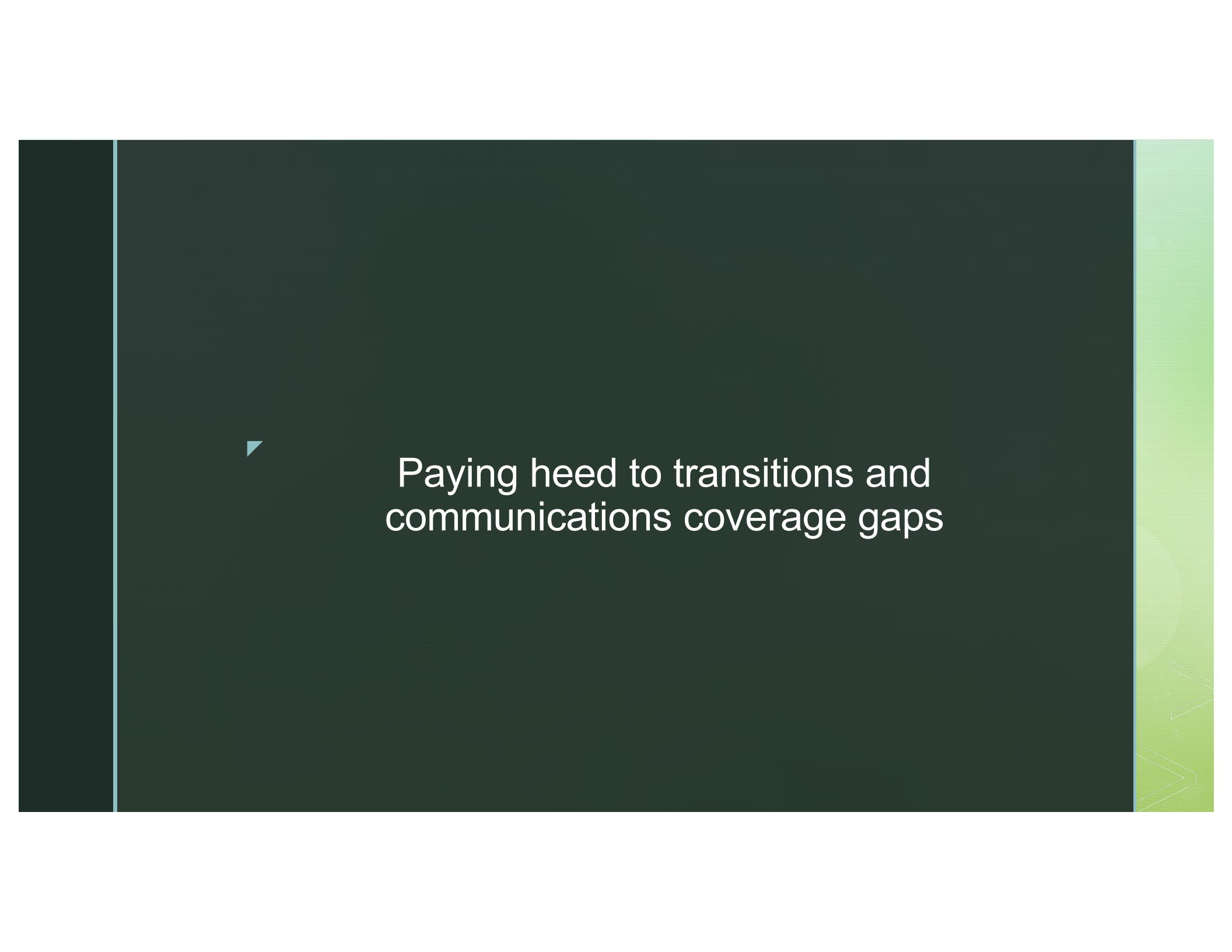
Challenges

- Administering timber sales within agreement structure
- Interaction of partners and timber staff
- Partner politics
- Very dependent on partner and Forest setting

LESSONS LEARNED



- Establishment and maintenance of common vision for stewardship contracting




▶ Paying heed to transitions and communications coverage gaps

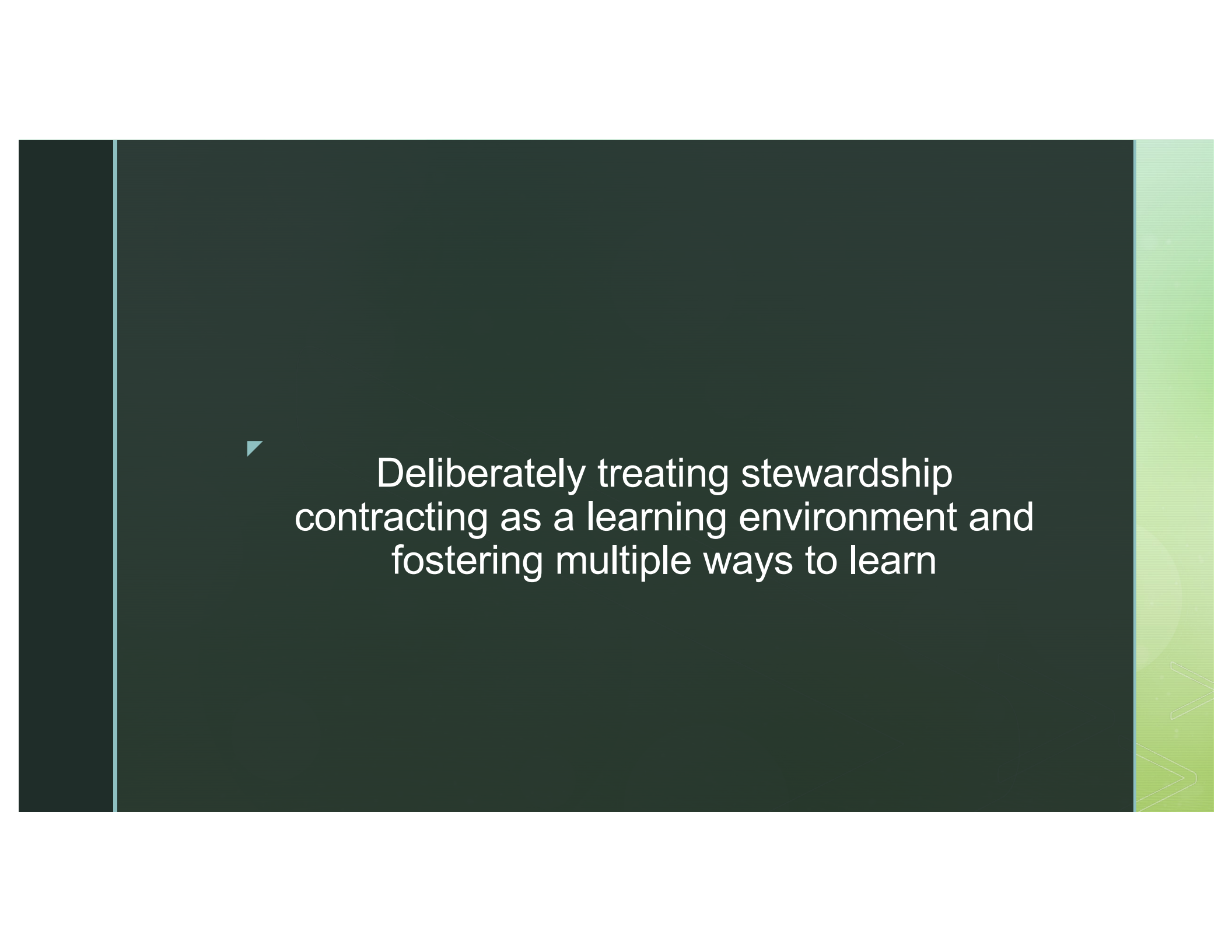


Valuing the capacity of contractors and partners to meet intended outcomes

- Increased transparency about appraisal process, considerations of costs per acre at scale, and updates on Forest Products Modernization



Engaging in open, early, and continued
dialogue about the meaning of local
community benefit



Deliberately treating stewardship contracting as a learning environment and fostering multiple ways to learn



Mark Webb

Conclusions

- Large stewardship projects have created novel opportunities and significant outcomes

Conclusions

- The practice of large stewardship projects can continue to evolve and improve with deliberate learning and collaboration





Thank You

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Vaagen Bros. Lumber